

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM
HABITAT ENHANCEMENT AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL**

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: Deadman Mesa Grassland Maintenance

Project No. 07-607

Region/GMU: Region VI / Unit 22

HPC: Payson Natural Resources Committee

Project Type: Mechanical Thinning (Agar-ax)

Project Description:

This project is a landscape project that involves Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) and the Tonto National Forest (TNF). This project involves the removal of approximately 300 acres of junipers by agar-ax On Deadman Mesa in Game Management Unit 22. Tonto National Forest has completed the first phase of the Project in 1999 by cutting 300 area of juniper and the construction of one water catchment.

Wildlife Species to Benefit: Elk, Mule Deer

Possible Funding Partners:

Implementation Schedule:

Beginning: June 1, 2008

NEPA Compliance: Yes

Completed: May 31, 2013

PROJECT FUNDING

SBG Funds Requested: \$ 33,000

Cost Share Funds: \$ 13,125

Total Project Costs: \$ 43,125

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Applicant: Henry Apfel

Address:

Arizona Game and Fish Dept.
7200 E. University
Mesa, AZ 85207

Telephone: (928) 476-2264

AGFD Contact and Phone No.

(If applicant is not AGFD personnel)

Coordinated with: USFS, Tonto National Forest, Payson Ranger District, NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service,

Applicant's signature:

Date:

SEND COMPLETED APPLICATIONS TO:
Mark Zornes, Game Branch
2221 W. Greenway Rd. Phoenix, AZ 85023

WAS PROJECT PRESENTED TO LOCAL HPC: YES

HAS THE PROJECT BEEN SUBMITTED IN PREVIOUS YEARS: YES

It was funded, and the USFS was unable to come up with its funding.

NEED STATEMENT/PROBLEM ANALYSIS:

The plant community in the area is primarily pinon/juniper woodland, which historically were grasslands through the years until junipers have invaded the area. Junipers are currently in need of removal to reestablish grassland that historically occurred in the area. Removal of junipers would be accomplished through the use of an agra-axe. After removal and drying, the treated juniper slash would need to be burned to enhance the production of grasses and forbs and reduce the juniper sprouts.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

The primary objective of this project is to establish 300 acres of grassland habitat through the use of an agra-axe by the removal of junipers. With the additional forage it will reduce the impact of elk in the Strawberry area. The Deadman allotment has also been designated a none use (livestock) allotment. Habitat enhancement would occur through the removal of junipers and subsequent burning to expand the grassland/woodland edge effect. This project will dovetail nicely with another juniper thinning project that was completed in by 1999, and a water development project that was completed in 2000.

The reestablishment of historical grassland is a goal of Region 6 habitat objectives. Wildlife Management Program Strategic Plan and the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy 2005-2015.

PROJECT STRATEGIES:

Use an agra-axe to remove junipers on approximately 300 acres of historic grassland. The project area may be subject to a prescribed broadcast burn 3 to 5 years after tree thinning, for fuel reduction and to eliminate juniper resprouts.

LAND OWNERSHIP AT PROJECT SITE (Please state specifically if PRIVATE PROPERTY and provide landowner's name):

The land is managed by the United States Forest Service, Tonto National Forest, and Payson Ranger District.

IF PRIVATE PROPERTY, IS THERE A STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LANDOWNER AND THE DEPARTMENT?

None

PROJECT LOCATION:

The project is located approximately two miles west of Strawberry in Game Management Unit 22 (T2N, R7E, S26, 27,34,35). See attached map.

ITEMIZED USE OF FUNDS:

**Deadman Mesa Grassland Maintenance Habitat Enhancement
BUDGET ANALYSIS**

COOPERATOR AND PROJECT COMONENT	COST- SHARE DOLLARS AVAILABLE	SBG FUNDS REQUESTED
Arizona Game and Fish Department (SBG Funds) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Fund of the on-the-ground cost associated with operation of the agra-axe. Calculated as 300 acres @ \$110/acre.		\$33,000
Arizona Game and Fish Department <ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide in-kind labor to write proposal, coordinate project, complete report, etc. Calculated as five days @ \$125/day.	\$625	
USDA – Tonto National Forest, Payson Ranger District <ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide administrative support including labor/funding to produce NEPA and archaeological clearances.(competed)..	\$5,000 \$7,500	
Totals:	\$13.125	\$33,000

Total Project Cost: \$46,125

Ratio Of Cost-Share Dollars: SBG Funds = 1 : 2.5

HABITAT DESCRIPTION:

The plant community in the area is primarily a pinon/juniper woodland at an average elevation of 5700 feet above sea level. Species include many high desert grasses, alligator juniper, pinon pine, and oak brush. The sight is flat as it is on top of a mesa. Average precipitation is 20 inches a year. The diversity of plant species

would increase after treatment with more grasses, shrubs, and forbs, which will produce forage for elk, and deer.

LIST COOPERATORS AND DESCRIBE POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION:

Arizona Game and Fish Department – Special Big Game Funds

- Provide the funding for agra-axe contracted operation to cut 300 acres at an estimated \$110/acre.
- Provide in-kind contributions in the form of labor for contract administration, project origination, and project coordination.

U.S. Forest Service, Tonto National Forest, Payson Ranger District

- Provide administrative support in the form of necessary NEPA and archaeological clearances, both are completed.
- Provide letter of approval for implementation of project (Decision Memo by June 2007, USFS).
- Provide on-the-ground boundary marking.

Agra-axe Contractor

- Provide agra-axe and operator through project completion.

Payson Natural Resources Committee

- Review project.

PROJECT MONITORING PLAN:

The project proponent will ensure project completion with coordination between Arizona Game and Fish Department and Payson Ranger District.

This area would be surveyed by the Arizona Game and Fish Department and will be monitored for wildlife use.

PROJECT MAINTENANCE:

Project maintenance and monitoring will be completed by the project proponent.

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT TO BE FILED BY:

The project proponent is responsible for completing the project completion report.

WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (see attached worksheet):

TREE SHEARING (AGRA-AXE, PUSH) PROJECTS (see attached worksheet):

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT TREE SHEARING WORKSHEET

PROJECT NAME: Deadman Mesa Grassland Maintenance

- 1) What is the estimated acreage of the project?
300
- 2) How are the trees to be cleared? (agra axe, chain saw, push):
Agra-axe
- 3) What is the estimated number of trees per acre?
60-80,
- 4) Describe trees to be cleared (species, estimated diameter, single stem, multi-stem):
Alligator juniper, <8 inches dbh, multi-stem
- 5) Describe terrain (slope, soil type, rocks, etc.)
Flat or gentle slope with a few rocks although there are areas with more rocks.
- 6) Please list any special land management status for the project site (i.e. Wilderness, National Park, National Monument, etc). If private land, list landowner.
N/A
- 7) Please provide the following information about access to the proposed site:
Type of access (mark one): __2x4 vehicles __X__4x4 only __foot only**
**If foot access only: Distance in miles: Approx. hiking time:

Does access to this site require crossing private or tribal lands? __YES
_X_NO

Is the site relatively accessible for tree shearing equipment? _X_YES
__NO

Please describe any restrictions to public access:
N/A